



**MUSIC**

**IA1 – INNOVATIVE PERFORMANCE**

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*La Cathédrale engloutie* (The Sunken Cathedral) is an impressionist piece by Debussy was written with the ancient Breton myth of a submerged cathedral in mind. The cathedral, would rise out of the water on clear days and the sounds of priests chanting, bells chiming and the organ playing can be heard across the sea.

To begin the piece, Debussy uses parallel fifths in the beginning, the stark harmony mimicking the sound of chimes resonating across the sea and fostering the expression marking – *Profondement calme*. At bar 16, Debussy creates the impression of the cathedral gently rising from the water by creating a faster moving, wave-like melody and harmony. Bar 28 is the pinnacle of the piece, in which the cathedral has now fully emerged and the organ can be clearly heard. After the organ makes its grand entrance, the cathedral begins to sink again from 41, which can be seen from the dynamics indicated. The cathedral can be heard once more from bar 70, underneath the water. Debussy creates this effect by utilising the murky timbre that comes with the use of the bottom register, distorting melody notes.

The piece's time signature,  $6/4 = 3/2$ , indicates a fluidity of strong beats within the piece. By using the rhythms notated as a guide, I will change fluidly between the two time signatures allowing a shift of strong beats, such as bar 21 to 22. Rubato will be utilised to create the impression of flowing, shifting, cascading water – this will be accomplished by tying the tempo with the pitch and the volume. Especially with quavers (Bar 16) in the left hand, the peak of the phrases will be the loudest and the fastest – adding to the impression of flowing water. The melody also shifts from hand to hand and by making the harmony constant, the melody will be able to break through murky textures created (Bars 22-23 to 24-26). Specialised pedalling will also be employed to match the phrasing and intended harmonisation. Pedal points are essential and as such, a new pedal point will correlate with a break in sustain to allow the pedal point to truly be heard with each chord played above. To allow for the greatest range of dynamic expression, *una corda* pedal will be utilised for pianissimo sections (Bar 16 & 42) and I will use my full body weight to play fortissimo when required (Bars 23-38).



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